

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Geneseo Man Ordered to Serve 27 Months in Federal Prison for Receiving Fraudulent Hurricane Katrina Relief Funds**

Rock Island, IL – Rodger A. Heaton, United States Attorney for the Central District of Illinois, announced that Timothy William Seefeldt, age 32, of Geneseo, Illinois, was sentenced this morning to serve 27 months in prison for fraudulently receiving Hurricane Katrina relief funds in September 2005. U.S. District Judge Michael M. Mihm further ordered that Seefeldt pay restitution in the amount of \$1,197 to the American Red Cross and \$2,000 to the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Seefeldt has been detained in federal custody since his arrest on the fraud charge in December 2005. In July 2006, Seefeldt pled guilty to the offense, admitting that he fraudulently applied for and received Hurricane Katrina disaster relief at the Moline, Illinois office of the American Red Cross in September 2005. Seefeldt further admitted that in his application for assistance, he falsely claimed that his primary residence was located in Biloxi, Mississippi, in an area declared a disaster by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Based on Seefeldt's claim that his Biloxi residence was damaged, the Red Cross authorized and made arrangements for him to stay at a Davenport, Iowa hotel for 14 nights at a rate of \$59.95 per night.

On September 21, 2005, Seefeldt applied for FEMA disaster relief benefits using a toll-free telephone number to reach a FEMA processing center. When Seefeldt pled guilty, he admitted that for his FEMA application, he falsely claimed that his primary residence in Biloxi, Mississippi had been damaged by Hurricane Katrina and that he needed not only food, clothing, and shelter but also that he had experienced a work loss due to the hurricane. Seefeldt subsequently received FEMA funds for housing assistance.

The Rock Island County Sheriff's Department and U.S. Secret Service investigated the case which was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Sara L. Darrow.

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